

April 29, 2010

Washington, D.C. – Legislation introduced by Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) to help improve medical care for veterans passed the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health today with bipartisan and unanimous support. H.R. 5145, the Assuring Quality Care for Veterans Act, is supported by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

"Our veterans put their lives on the line for our country," said Rep. McNerney. "We must ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs is adequately prepared to serve these men and women. This legislation will help make sure our veterans get the best possible care from medical professionals with up-to-date training."

H.R. 5145, the Assuring Quality Care for Veterans Act, will encourage VA medical professionals to participate in continuing education courses in their field of practice by increasing the amount of money the VA will cover for such classes from \$1,000 to \$1,600. This will be the first time the reimbursement rate has increased since 1991.

H.R. 5145 also allows the VA to offer reimbursements for continuing professional education to more VA health care employees, such as nurses, psychologists, physical therapists and other medical providers. Currently, only physicians and dentists can be reimbursed by the VA for continuing education courses.

This provision is particularly important given the need for health care professionals who should be equipped with up-to-date training on how to provide care for traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). TBI and PTSD are hallmarks of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Ensuring quality medical care is an important step towards keeping our promise to the men and women who have served our country," said Rep. McNerney. "I'm going to keep working for all our veterans to get the care they've earned."

H.R. 5145 is now expected to be considered by the full House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.